



Maryland Chiefs of Police Association

Maryland Sheriffs' Association



MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable William Smith, Jr., Chair and
Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Chief of Staff David Morris, Co-Chair, MCPA, Joint Legislative Committee
Sheriff Darren Popkin, Co-Chair, MSA, Joint Legislative Committee
Andrea Mansfield, Representative, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee

DATE: March 16, 2022

RE: **SB 949 Police Officer - Education Requirements - Certification and Scholarships**

POSITION: **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS**

The Maryland Chiefs of Police Association (MCPA) and the Maryland Sheriffs' Association (MSA) **SUPPORT SB 949 WITH AMENDMENTS**. This bill imposes minimum degree requirements for initial certification and recertification as a police officer, requires law enforcement agencies to provide work-related administrative leave for law enforcement officers to satisfy degree requirements, and provides a mechanism for awarding scholarships to advance education within the profession of law enforcement.

MCPA and MSA appreciate and fully support the sponsor's intent of this bill to advance educational opportunities for those who pursue a career in law enforcement. Historically, increased education and training requirements have long been topics of discussion in policing in the United States. August Vollmer (1876-1995), advocated the development of college education programs in police science and standardized training for police academies in an effort to produce professional and educated officers and police chiefs. In the 1960s, both the Kerner Commission and the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice recommended education requirements for hiring officers in order to employ better-qualified officers. In the 2015 President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing report, one of the pillars called for educational standards and increased ethics training in order to develop professionalism in policing.

MCPA and MSA do have concern that the minimum degree requirements for application and mandatory degree requirement to maintain certification will adversely affect recruiting and retention efforts already at historic lows, especially in diverse communities. Likewise, some of these requirements mandating agencies to provide administrative leave will negatively impact

agencies' abilities to maintain operational readiness and continuity of operations that may adversely affect delivery of service and the safety of our communities.

The MCPA and MSA look forward to working with the sponsor to find a reasonable and responsible approach that fosters educational opportunity, reimbursing those law enforcement officers who desire to pursue advanced education. The MCPA and MSA recognize that reducing police misconduct is essential to the productivity of a department, as well as maintaining positive community-police relations, and that education has proven to be a protective factor against citizen complaints.

For these reasons, MCPA and MSA **SUPPORT SB 949** and urge a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENT** Committee report.